

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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S/S-O: W.NEWLIN

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TO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CB (LON NON)

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH LON NON

1. DEPT. OFFICER WAS INVITED TO LON NON'S NEW HOME IN SUBURBAN MARYLAND OCTOBER 2 TO INAUGURATE WHAT PROMISES TO BE A GUEST HOUSE FOR ITINERANT LON NON CRONIES. SUBSTANCE OF A WIDERANGING CONVERSATION FOLLOWS:

INTERNAL KHMER POLITIC: LON NON SAID THAT WHILE IN PARIS LAST WEEK HE HAD LEARNED THAT SOME FUNK ADHERENTS WERE UNHAPPY OVER SIHANOUK'S STATEMENTS IN ALGIERS. HE ALSO TALKED TO MAU SAY WHO ARRIVED IN FRANCE ON PERSONAL BUSINESS IN ADDITION TO BGEN. LES KOSSEM AND SEVERAL UN-NAMED YOUNG DEPUTIES. HIS AIDE TAN SUOR BROUGHT SOME 50 LETTERS FROM HIS SUPPORTERS WISHING HE WERE IN PHNOM PENH "COORDINATING" THINGS. THE CONSENSUS OF OPINION FROM HOME, ACCORDING TO LON NON, WAS THAT THE SOCIO-REPUBLICANS IN PARLIAMENT WERE ANXIOUS TO RESUME THE FUNCTIONS FOR
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WHICH THEY HAD BEEN ELECTED AND WERE STILL BEING PAID. LON NON ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD RECEIVED A LETTER FROM LON NOL REPORTING THAT THE MARSHAL WAS UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE TO PUT THE ASSEMBLY BACK INTO BUSINESS. LON NON

WONDERED ALOUD WHY THE HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL COULDN'T DELEGATE SOME OF ITS POWER TO ASSEMBLY. LON NON DID NOT SPECIFY WHAT POWERS HE WOULD ALLOCATE TO THE ASSEMBLY BUT

WHEN ASKED ABOUT WHAT IT WAS IN THE ASSEMBLY'S ACTIVITIES THAT HAD IRRITATED THE ARMY AND HIS BROTHER BEFORE 1971, LON NON CONCEDED THAT BUDGET DEBATES AND INTERPELLATIONS OR MINISTERS HAD BEEN VERY GALLING. LON NON SAID THAT THE FORMER ASSEMBLY WAS A GROUP OF "OLD MEN" AND THE NEW PARLIAMENT HAD YOUNGER PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT CONTENT TO SIT QUIETLY, PARTICULARLY WITH A HIGH COUNCIL THAT IS SO OBVIOUSLY AT ODDS WITH ITSELF. (LON NON, WHO ALSO MEETS REGULARLY WITH COL. H.O. AMOS OF DOD/ISA TOLD HIM A S SIMILAR STORY. HE TOLD AMOS THAT THE SOCIO-REPS WERE THREATENING EN MASSE DEFECTION TO YEM SEMBAUR'S AND CHAU SAU'S PARTIES).

BECAUSE WE HAD A SIMILAR PITCH MADE TO US BY ASSEMBLY VICE PRESIDENT PAN SOTHI THE WEEKEND BEFORE, WE TOOK PARTICULAR PAINS TO INDICATE TO LON NON USG VIEW THAT GIVEN THE UN CREDENTIALS SITUATION AND THE DIFFICULTIES IN CONGRESS WITH CAMBODIAN ASSISTANCE NOW WAS NOT THE TIME TO DEMONSTRATE INTERNAL INSTABILITY. WE TOLD LON NON THAT VERY DEFINITE PROGRESS BEING MADE HERE AND ABROAD IN UNDERSTANDING CAMBODIA'S PLIGHT. WE TOLD LON NON THAT GIVEN THE SUCCESS OF FANK AT KOMPONG CHAM, THE CONTINUED VIABILITY OF FANK ELSEWHERE AND SIHANOUK'S REMARKABLE UTTERANCES RECENTLY THERE WERE GLIMMERS OF PUBLIC CONPREHENSION ABOUT HIS COUNTRY THAT HAD NOT BEEN EVIDENT EARLIER. WE STRESSED TO LON NON NOTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO ENDANGER THIS PROMISING PROCESS. WE SAID THAT, IN OUR VIEW, THE MOST IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES FOR THE LEADERSHIP IN CAMBODIA WERE THE RECRUITMENT PROGRAM AND PREPARATION OF THE INTERVENTION BRIGADES FOR A ROUGH DRY SEASON CAMPAIGN AHEAD. WE OUTLINED FOR HIM
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US RECOMMENDATIONS MADE FOR THE FREE RICE RATIONS AND TROOP BONUS FOR THE INTERVENTION BRIGADES AND ECHOED YOUR STATEMENTS THAT THE USG WAS NOT GOING TO ISSUE ARMS FOR A NON- EXISTENT ARMY.

RESPONDING TO A GENERAL QUESTION ABOUT PUBLIC ATTITUDES AT HOME, LON NON SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE STUDENTS WERE NOW COMPLETELY APETHETIC AND THAT THE INTELLECTUALS WERE ALSO DISILLUSIONED. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT THE INTELLECTUALS IN THE PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE KEPT OCCUPIED, HE SAID. LON NON FELT THAT FEW INTELLECTUALS OR STUDENTS WERE DEFECTING TO THE OTHER SIDE BECAUSE IT WAS KNOWN THAT THE KI WERE NOT RECEIVING THEM WITH OPEN ARMS AND IN THE RARE INSTANCES THAT THEY WERE NOT DRAGOONED INTO THE ARMY WERE LIQUIDATED BECAUSE

THE COMMUNIST DID NOT TRUST PHNOM PENH INTELLECTUALS.

CONCERNING REORGANIZATION OF THE SOCIO-REPUBLICAN PARTY, LON NON SAID, THAT HE WAS NOT AGAINST A COALITION BETWEEN THE REPUBLICANS AND THE SOCIO-REPUBLICANS BUT THAT THE REPUBLICANS WERE "LIMITED IN THEIR POSSIBILITIES" AND THE ONLY INDIVIDUALS OF NOTE IN THE GROUP WERE SIRIK MATAK, OP KIM ANG AND TRINH HOANH. LON NON DISPARAGED THE LATTER TWO AND SAID "PRINCE" SIRIK MATAK WAS TOO "HAUGHTY". NON TOLD AMOS THAT KENG VANNSAK WAS RETURNING TO PHNOM PENH OCTOBER 10, PRESUMABLY TO CONTEST THE PARTY ELECTION. TALKING ABOUT IN TAM, NON SPOKE OF THE FRICTION BETWEEN THE PM AND SOSTHENES. ASKED WHY IN TAM HAD NOT VISITED KOMPONG CHAM DURING ITS VITAL HOUR, WE LEARNED THAT IN TAM HAD EARLIER ASKED LON NOL TO ASSIGN HIM AS GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE AS HE HAD BEEN IN 1970 AND WHEN LON NOL REFUSED AND NAMED SAR HOR INSTEAD, IN TAM REFUSED TO VISIT HIS HOME TOWN.

LON NON ALSO TOLD AMOS THAT HE THOUGHT THAT CHANN SOKHUM, KENG VANNSAK HANG THUN HAD OR MAY SAY WOULD BE GOOD CHOICES FOR THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP. NON STRESSED
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THAT THE COUNTRY NEEDED A MAN WHO WOULD EXECUTE THE MARSHALLS ORDERS TO STRENGTHEN THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF COUNTRY IN THE FACE OF THE ENEMY. FOR EXAMPLE, LON NON SAID HE BELIEVED THAT ONLY THE FOREIGN MINISTER SHOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE OTHER SIDE AND NOT THE MANY DESPARATE INDIVIDUALS NOW TRYING TO TALK TO THE COMMUNISTS.

LON NON SAID THAT SOSTHENES FERNANDEZ WOULD MAKE A GOOD PRIME MINISTER AND HE THOUGHT THAT HOU HANG SIN WOULD BE A GOOD REPLACEMENT FOR HIM AS CHIEF OF STAFF. ANOTHER CAPABLE GENERAL, NON SAID, WAS MAJOR-GENERAL SREY SAMAN WHOSE EXILE SINCE 1971 WAS THE DIRECT RESULT OF DIFFERENCES WITH SIRIK MATAK.

KHMER ISLAM: NON MENTIONED THAT LES KOSSEM WAS ALSO DISCOURAGED ABOUT THE SITUATION AT HOME. NON SAID HE HAD INVITED HIM TO VISIT THE US AND STAY WITH HIM FOR AN UNSPECIFIED PERIOD OF TIME. SINCE NON APPEARED WILLING TO TALK ABOUT SOME OF HIS AND KOSSEM'S EARLIER ACTIVITIES WITH FULRO (FRONT UNI POUR LA LUTTE DES RACES OPPRIMES). WE TOUCHED ON SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE CHAM QUESTION. NON SAID THAT THE GKR HAD MADE A MISTAKE IN NOT RECRUITING A DIVISION SIZED CHAM UNIT IN 1970 AND HAD OTHERWISE MISHANDLED A NUMBER OF OPPORTUNITIES TO

USE THIS IMPORTANT MINORITY IN CAMBODIA. ASKED ABOUT THE PRESENT WHEREABOUTS OF FORMER FULRO LEADER Y B'HAM

ENOUL, NON INDICATED THAT HE WAS ALIVE AND WELL IN PHNOM PENH WHERE HE HAD BEEN SINCE 1969.

MADAME LON NON'S PROBLEM IN PARIS: NON SAID THAT THE INCIDENT AT PARIS HAD BEEN EXAGGERATED BY THE PRESS AND THAT IT HAD BEEN SETTLED AMICABLY. NON SAID THAT HE HAD NONRESIDENT STATUS IN FRANCE AND AS SUCH COULD TRANSFER FUNDS WITHOUT RESTRICTION AND HE LEFT THE PROBLEM AND THE MONEY FOR HIS BANK TO TRANSFER.

LON NON'S "COURSES": NON SAID THAT HE WOULD BE COMMENCING HIS ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING IMMEDIATELY AND WE STRESSED THE DESIRABILITY OF THIS BEFORE HE BECAME IN-SECRET

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VOLVED IN OTHER PROJECTS. NON SAID HE WAS INTERESTED IN WORKING ON SOME SPECIFIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS SCHEMES AND HAD ASKED PHNOM PENH FOR SPECIFIC DATA. IN WHAT CAN ONLY BE VIEWED AS A TRIAL BALLOON, NON SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR HIM TO MAKE A SHORT TRIP TO PHNOM PENH TO GET THE NECESSARY INFORMATION AND DATA THAT WOULD PERMIT HIM TO PURSUE HIS PROJECTS HERE. SINCE THE NATURE OF THE CONVERSATION AND THE FAMILY CIRCLE FOREGATHERED DIDN'T LEND ITSELF TO A FLAT NEGATIVE RESPONSE WE INDICATED THAT WE HOPED PHNOM PENH WOULD COME THROUGH WITH SOME PERTINENT DOSSIERS. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT YOU ARRANGE TO HAVE A VARIETY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ASSEMBLED, PERHAPS THOSE ALREADY SUBMITTED TO UN AGENCIES AND SENT IMMEDIATELY TO LON NON THROUGH THE GKR POUCH.

AS EXPECTED, NON'S DYNAMISM AND HIS CONTINUED CONTACT WITH PHNOM PENH ARE SUCH THAT IF HE IS NOT GAINFULLY EMPLOYED IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO CONTAIN HIM. HE IS WELL AWARE FROM OUR EARLIER CONVERSATIONS THAT WE VIEW HIM AS A DEVISIVE FACTOR IN CAMBODIA AND HE SO SOME UNSPECIFIED MEMBERS OF THE UN DELEGATION WHO HE CLAIMED WERE NOT PULLING THEIR WEIGHT. HE NOTED THAT HE WAS NEVERTHELESS REFRAINING FROM RETURNING TO NEW YORK BECAUSE HE WAS SO CONTROVERSIAL. WE DO NOT DOUBT OUR ABILITY TO KEEP HIM HERE BUT TO KEEP THE RELATIONSHIP AMICABLE HE SHOULD BE GIVEN NO PRETEXTS SUCH AS THE FOREGOING TO ASK TO RETURN HOME. KISSINGER

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